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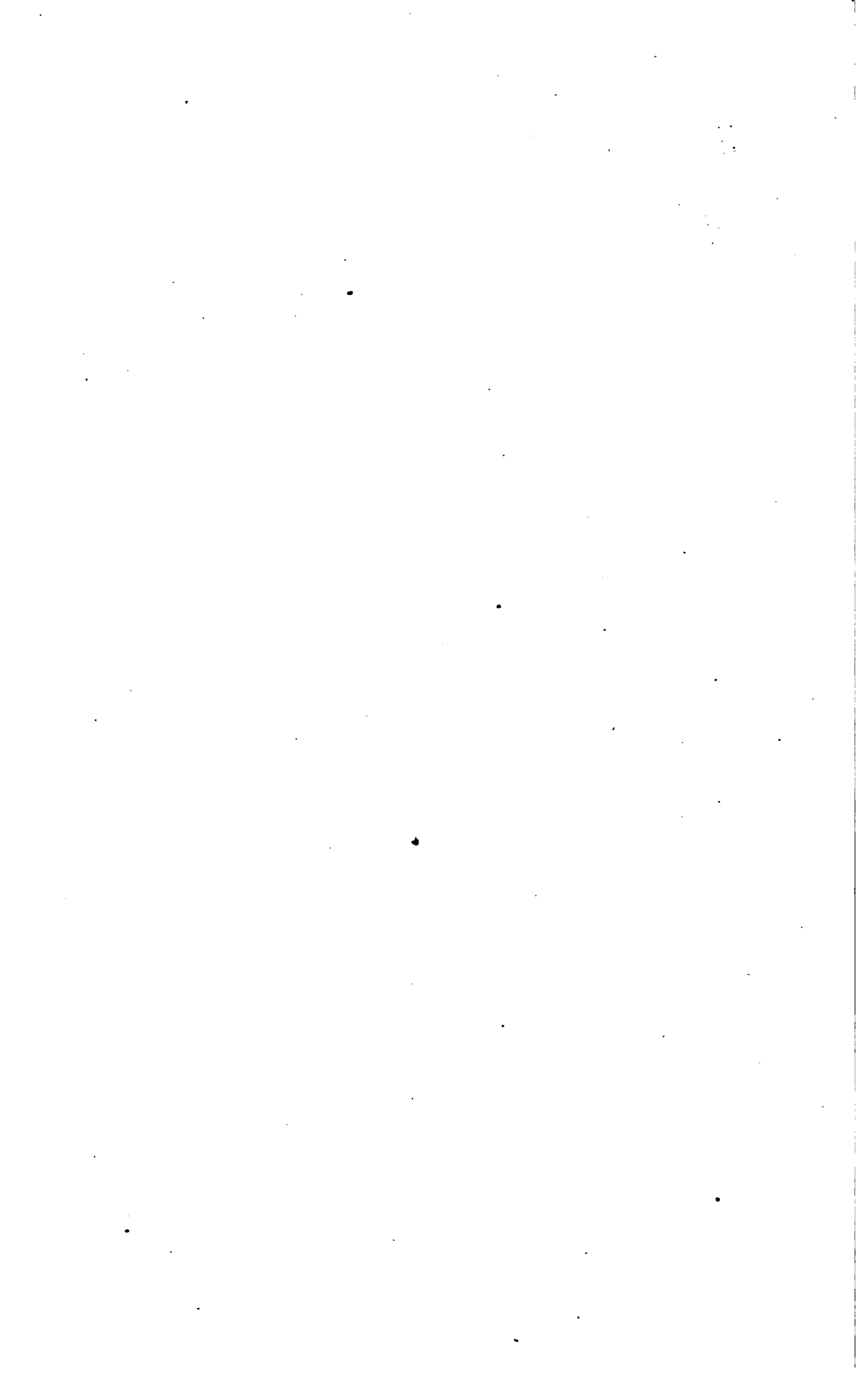
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ON THE AVESTIC TERMS

MAZDA—AHURA—MAZDA—AHURA

BY

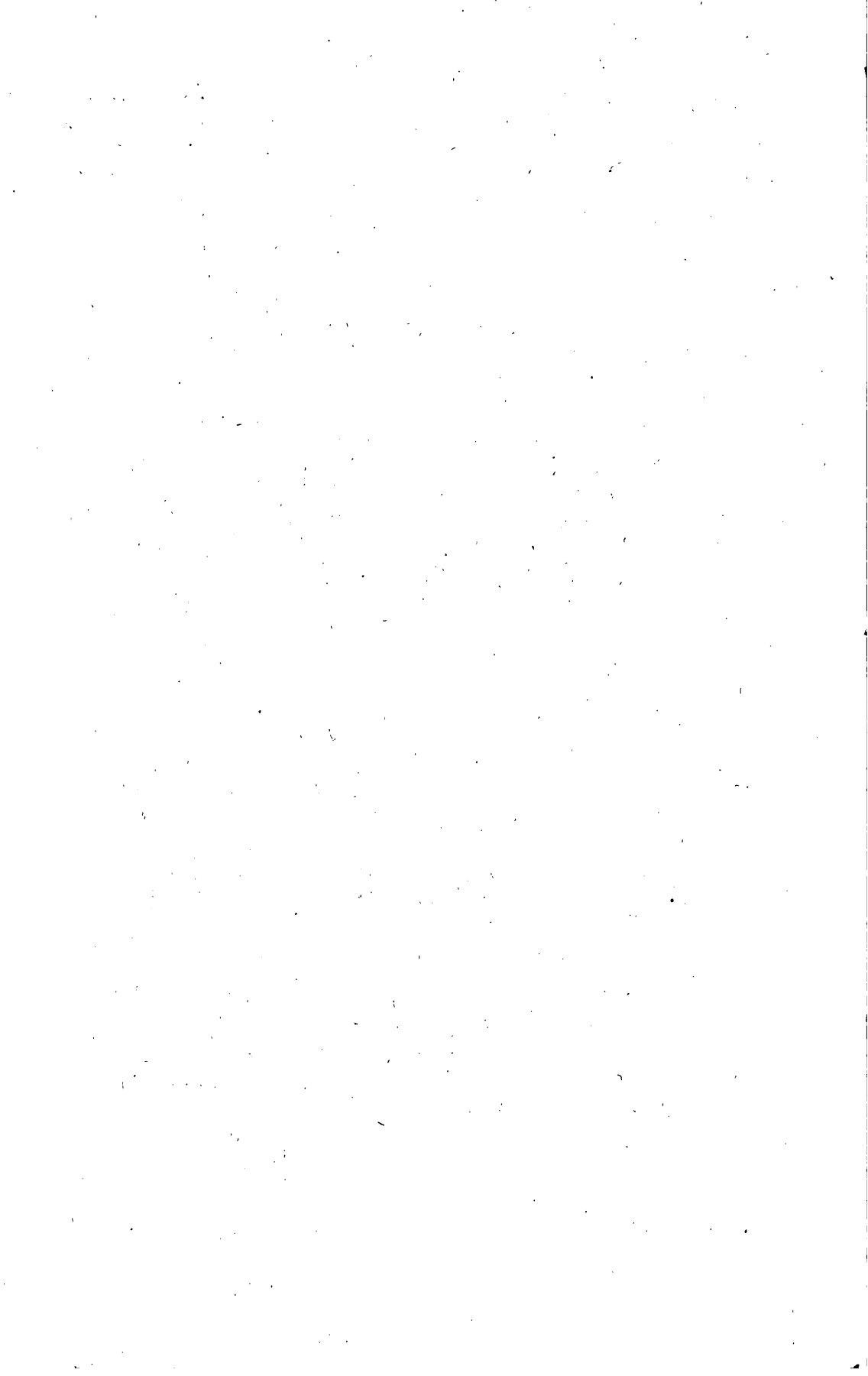
Dastur JĀMĀSPJEE MINOCHEHERJEE

JĀMĀSPĀSĀNA,

Head Priest of the Parsis at Bombay.

Tiré du vol. II des Travaux de la 6^e session du Congrès international
des Orientalistes à Leide.

LEIDE. — E. J. BRILL.
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WHO IS THE ALMIGHTY GOD MAZDA, AHURA- MAZDA OR AHURA?

I venture to embrace this opportunity of laying before this noble gathering of my learned friends and scholars a paper on the long discussed and yet unsettled question of the Avestic terms „Mazda,” „Ahura-mazda” and „Ahura” by which the Lord of the Universe is distinguished, and trust that the question may be fully discussed at the assembly and an unanimous settlement be arrived at. Various opinions founded on Avesta writings have been given by different Oriental Scholars on this subject. A large portion of them hold that „Mazda” and „Ahura” are one and the same name by which the Lord of the Creation is known, some assign the term „Mazda” to Him, while some say that „Ahura-mazda” is the sole Lord or Creator of the Universe.

Now, my learned friends, before I enter into details and give my humble opinion on this important subject full of mysteries and secret intelligence, I must own that my humble and poor abilities and talents will not admit of doing proper justice to the difficult question and consequently trust that any misgivings or defects traceable in the paper will meet with your usual kind forbearance.

It must be remembered that the Lord of the Creation is known by his own works—such as the movement of different planets and stars in their various directions, appointed by

Him, His Omnipotence, His divine supremacy and all-presence among all His providence, His marvelous almighty sacred and superhuman inspirations in all his angelic and worldly beings, and his all-merciful and virtuous divinity and infinite power and authority over the whole Universe, &c. &c. We will now proceed to examine in which of the above mentioned three names are all such characteristic qualities to be traced — in Mazda, Ahura-mazda, or Ahura — by a minute examination I have come to the conclusion that a great portion of his qualities are to be traced in the term Ahura according to Avesta writings.

We will in the beginning consider the first of the three terms, „*Mazda*” given at the head of this paper. On a review of the Avesta books I find that „*Mazda*” is not a denomination by which the Creator is recognised, but it is a mere title attached to „*Ahura*” the primeval and first created Spirit of that „*Ahura*” who is the sole Lord of the Creation. On looking over the meaning of the term „*Mazda*,” we can clearly see that it is not meant to be the name of any being but a mere adjective or title applied to „*Ahura*” as I have said before — it is made up of two words *Maz* + *da*. *Maz* (Sanskrit माहू, Pahlavi 𐭣𐭥, Persian م) means „great;” and *da* (from dá, Sans. दाय and Pers. دانش) means „wisdom;” and the whole term „*Mazda*” means „of high wisdom or intellect or providence.” It is then clear enough that the term „*Mazda*” is not a name or denomination but a mere title given only to „*Ahura*,” the primeval spirit, created by the sole Lord „*Ahura*.” This spirit „*Ahura*” is universally known by the same name as his Creator from the beginning of the ages or creation. Now, because the name of the created spirit is the same by which his creator or the sole Lord is known, the title of „*Mazda*” has been added to the name of the created spirit, to „*Ahura*” as a mark of distinction to avoid

confusion. In like manner the adjective „*vohu* = good” is prefixed to the original term „*Mano* = thought,” and the whole word „*Vohumano*” = good thought is the name of the angel *Beheman*; as also the affix „*vahishta* = best, or most exalted” is attached to the original term „*Asha* = truth, piety, virtue, &c;,” and the whole word „*Ashavahishta*” which means „the greatest or the best truth” is the name of the angel „*Ardi-behesht*,” and so on.

It may, however, be asked as to how the religion, known in the Avesta as „*Daéna Mazdayasna*,” given to the old Peshdadian kings by the angel „*Saraosh*,” and which was brought by Zoroaster in the time of king *Gustáspa* is called „the religion for the worshippers of *Mazda*,” and consequently it might be considered that *Mazda* is the name of a separate spirit or of the Lord of the Universe. To this I would simply reply that the „*Daéna Mazdayasna*,” referred to above, is the religion of the primeval spirit „*Ahura-mazda*,” and it was given by him to his chosen prophet Zoroastre, who promulgated the same in this world. Here the name of the religion is not called by the name of „*Ahura-mazda*” but by the epithet by which the primeval spirit is distinguished. „*Ahura-mazda*,” the primeval spirit, who reigns over the world on behalf of his Creator, the sole Lord of the Universe, is known in the Avesta by his title alone, and in the same way his religion is distinguished by his title affixed to it. This clearly shows that the term „*Mazda*” is not the name of the Creator but the title by which his first created spirit is distinguished.

It might also be said that the term „*Mazdá*” is used in some places in the *Gáthás* without the word „*Ahurá*,” and therefore the word *Mazdá* should mean „the Creator.” But it is evident that the composition of the *Gáthás* is metrical and therefore the term „*Mazdá*” is used in some places to denote „*Ahura-mazda*” in order to bring the rhyme. As the term „*Mazdá*” is used in the *Gáthás* to denote „*Ahura-*

mazda," so the term „Ahurá" is also used therein to denote „Ahura-mazda."


The Pahlavi translators of Yaçna have translated these terms — „Mazda” and „Ahura” as *-anhomá*, which means „Ahura-mazda. In the same way we find in Yaçna 51 and 53, as also in several other places in the Gáthás, that the terms „Ahuro-Mazdao” and „Mazdao-Ahuro” are used to denote „Ahuramazda” (see Yaçna, Westergaard’s texts, chap. 53, 1. — *𐬀𐬵𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬀𐬨𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬢𐬀𐬊𐬌𐬀* and Yaçna 51, 16. — *𐬀𐬵𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬀𐬨𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬢𐬀𐬊𐬌𐬀*)

(5-5555)

This clearly proves that the word Mazda or Mazdá does not mean „the sole Creator” or „Lord of the Universe” but is the title given to the Lord's first created spirit, who rules over the whole creation and who has supremacy over all other spirits and angels.

I will now draw your attention to the second term given in the heading of this paper, viz. „Ahura Mazda.” In the Avesta we frequently meet with the compound words „Ahura mazda” or „Mazdá Ahurá.” Most of the learned scholars take these terms to mean „the Creator of the World,” and in proof of this opinion they quote the first fargard of Vandidad; Yaçna 1, 1; Yaçna 13, 1; 16, 1 and 27, 1. In this view, I think, they are mistaken; for the account given of „Ahuramazda” in the passages we have just referred to is not of the sole Creator of the world, but of his primeval spirit, „Ahuramazda.” The Creator is the Almighty, all knowing Deity, void of any form, void of darkness, in power he has no one of his likeness, nor has he any antagonist, and he is not seen even by those heavenly beings that are invisible to us, he is Mino an-Mino. But „Ahuramazda” treated of in these passages has, as appears from the meaning of the Avesta, an antagonist, and he performs his work in co-operation with other Amésháspands and Yazads, in proof of which I would draw your attention to the following.

1st. The seven Ameshaspands are higher in rank among other angels created by the Lord of the Universe, and of these seven Ameshaspands, „Ahuramazda” is the chief and primeval spirit having supreme power over the whole creation. The other six Ameshaspands are his co-adjutors, and he is the head of them. These six Ameshaspands are „Vohu-mano or Beheman,” „Ashavahishta or Ardibehest,” „Khshathravairia or Sheherevar,” „Spenta Armaiti or Safandármad,” „Haorvatat or Khordád,” and „Ameretat or Amardád.” These seven Ameshaspands have one and the same office, and as Ameshaspands their namen appear in the following texts:

„This religion (of Homa Fráshmis) „was liked by the seven „Ameshaspands „— the holy Ahuramazda, Beheman, Ardi- „behesht, Sheherivar, Safandármad, Khordád and Amardád, „and they chose him (Homa Fráshmis) with all religious kindness „and regard” (see Meher Yasht para. 92. — )

[illegible]

Now in our books reference is made to the office of these seven Ameshaspands as follows:

"They the seven (Ameshaspands) are of one thought, one
speech and one deed, whose thoughts, speech and deeds are
all the same and alike," (see Farvardin yasht para. 83; and
Jamyād yasht para. 16. — འཛོམས་པ་བདུན་གྱི་ཡི་གེ་གཤམ་གྱི་ལཱ་ཁྲུང་།)

These passages clearly show that when Ahuramazdá's name is mentioned along with other six Ameshaspands as their co-operator, he cannot be the Supreme Being himself but the primeval spirit of the Creator.

2nd. There are however three other spirits created by the Supreme Being known in the Avesta by the name of „Dathuso.” The Zoroastrians recognize them by the name of „Deh” and commonly use the term to denote certain days in the month, as „Deh-pa-Ádar,” „Deh pa-Meher,” and „Deh-pa-Dín.” † († These are not the names of three angels or spirits mentioned above, but the three angels are only known as the three *Dehs*, but to avoid confusion the term „Deh” when used to denote certain days of the month is prefixed to the names of the tree days that follow it. Thus the 8th, 15th, and 23rd day of the month are the tree *Dehs*, but for distinguishing them from one another, the „Deh” denoting the 8th day is prefixed to „Ader” the 9th, and compounded into one term „Dehpádar,” likewise „Deh” the 15th and „Deh” the 23rd are prefixed to the 16th i. e. the „Meher,” and to 24th the „Dín” respectively and called the „Dehpameher” and „Dehpadín.”) These three spirits also act in company with „Ahuramazda” as his „Hamkárs” (fellow-actors). Here also we clearly see that when „Ahuramazda” is mentioned as acting in co-operation with the three *Dehs*, we can not recognize him as the Supreme Lord or Creator who must be some other Being altogether.

3rd. Again Ahuramazda’s name is mentioned in the Vandidad Chap. I, &c. Some of my learned friends hold that this Ahuramazda is the Creator of the Universe. I must certainly dissent from this opinion on the ground that there can be no antagonist of the Almighty Creator, and consequently the Ahuramazda mentioned in the Vandidad. Chaps I, XIX, XX and XXI can never be taken as the sole Lord of the world, there being his antagonist the „Angrahemainyu or Ahreman (the chief of all evil spirits) as clearly mentioned in the chapters I have just alluded to. In the „Afrin of the Hamkárs” it is stated that the evil spirit „Ganamino” (Here-man) is the adversary and opponent of „Ahuramazda” and

[illegible][illegible]

„The evil and destructive spirit, the infernal” Ganáminô” along with other „Dévas” and „Daruja” repulses and destroys the creation of „Ahuramazda.” In the same way Behman, Ardibehesht, Sheherivar, Safandarmad, Khurdád and Amerdád and their Hamkars are opposed in their actions by other evil spirits. Now Ahuramazda by virtue of the power given him by his Creator produces all good things in the world, such as creating human beings, giving them life, happiness, comfort, health, tc.; whereas „Angramainius” is capable of producing evil, such as to spoil, vitiate and destroy all the good creation of „Ahuramazda” and his associates, and to kill and injure all good production (see Vandidad Fargard I from para 3—20).

This convince us of the fact that the creator of the Universe is not „Ahuramazda” but some other being, If „Ahuramazda” was the creator (Almighty God), no one could have opposed him and his creation. No one would dare to resist the pleasure and action of the Sole Lord, and when *Ahuramazda's* actions are impeded by his antagonist *Ganamino*, as we have just seen from the Avesta itself, we can not hold for a moment that „Ahuramazda” could be the sole creator or Lord of the Universe.

4th. There is, however, another proof more striking and conclusive, to which I wish to invite your learned attention and after a sound consideration of which I have no doubt, you will arrive at the same conclusion which I have arrived at. I have already said that according to Avesta, the Almighty is imperceptible even to those heavenly beings as the Ameshaspands and the Yajatas &c., who are invisible to us. Now Ahuramazda is mentioned in Vandidad, Yaçna and Yashts as holding a conference, or, to say more correctly, catechism with Zarathustra on religious matters, as also with

king Jamshed about making a *vara* for the protection of his creation against the great tempest (see Vandidad II, 21—37). This Ahuramazda is therefore not the supreme being but the highest and first created spirit who, as I have said above, is the chief of the Ameshaspands and has control over the whole expanse of the world. Then again Ahuramazda's place in heaven is mentioned along with that of other Ameshaspands, Yajatas, and pious beings, (see Vandidad XIX, 32.

• ୧୫-୧୨-୧୯୫୫ ୧୫-୧୨-୧୯୫୫ •

For this reason also we can not take Ahuramazda to be the supreme being, whose place is far above that of the Garonamana (the abode of the Ameshaspands &c.)

5th. In the Avesta we generally see various titles of distinction attached to Ahuramazda. One of these titles is *asháum* as *asháum Ahuramazda* (see Hormazd yasht para. 5th 𐬀𐬁𐬎𐬵𐬭𐬀𐬰𐬚𐬙𐬌𐬨𐬆𐬔𐬡𐬭𐬏𐬊𐬯𐬛𐬥𐬱𐬟𐬩𐬍𐬕𐬶𐬘𐬢𐬗𐬳𐬭𐬀𐬠𐬓𐬃𐬖𐬫𐬮𐬧𐬑𐬪𐬤𐬞𐬽𐬿𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬾𐬿𐬽𐬸𐬹𐬷𐬶𐬵𐬴𐬳𐬲𐬱𐬰𐬯𐬮𐬭𐬬𐬫𐬪𐬩𐬨𐬧𐬦𐬥𐬤𐬣𐬢𐬡𐬠𐬟𐬞𐬝𐬜𐬛𐬚𐬙𐬘𐬗𐬖𐬕𐬔𐬓𐬒𐬑𐬐𐬏𐬎𐬍𐬌𐬋𐬊𐬉𐬈𐬇𐬆𐬅𐬄𐬃𐬂𐬁𐬀𐬠𐬓𐬃𐬖𐬫𐬮𐬧𐬑𐬪𐬤𐬞𐬽𐬿𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬾𐬿𐬽𐬸𐬹𐬷𐬶𐬵𐬴𐬳𐬲𐬱𐬰𐬯𐬮𐬭𐬬𐬫𐬪𐬩𐬨𐬧𐬦𐬥𐬤𐬣𐬢𐬡𐬠𐬟𐬞𐬝𐬜𐬛𐬚𐬙𐬘𐬗𐬖𐬕𐬔𐬓𐬒𐬑𐬐𐬏𐬎𐬍𐬌𐬋𐬊𐬉𐬈𐬇𐬆𐬅𐬄𐬃𐬂𐬁𐬀; also in Vandidad in many paragraphs we find 𐬀𐬁𐬎𐬵𐬭𐬀𐬰𐬚𐬙𐬌𐬨𐬆𐬔𐬡𐬭𐬏𐬊𐬯𐬛𐬥𐬱𐬟𐬩𐬍𐬕𐬶𐬘𐬢𐬗𐬳𐬭𐬀𐬠𐬓𐬃𐬖𐬫𐬮𐬧𐬑𐬪𐬤𐬞𐬽𐬿𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬾𐬿𐬽𐬸𐬹𐬷𐬶𐬵𐬴𐬳𐬲𐬱𐬰𐬯𐬮𐬭𐬬𐬫𐬪𐬩𐬨𐬧𐬦𐬥𐬤𐬣𐬢𐬡𐬠𐬟𐬞𐬝𐬜𐬛𐬚𐬙𐬘𐬗𐬖𐬕𐬔𐬓𐬒𐬑𐬐𐬏𐬎𐬍𐬌𐬋𐬊𐬉𐬈𐬇𐬆𐬅𐬄𐬃𐬂𐬁𐬀 this sentence generally used). The same word of distinction appears to have been attached to the name of Zoroastre as *Asháum Zarathushtra* (see Hormazd Yasht para. 7 𐬀𐬁𐬎𐬵𐬭𐬀𐬰𐬚𐬙𐬌𐬨𐬆𐬔𐬡𐬭𐬏𐬊𐬯𐬛𐬥𐬱𐬟𐬩𐬍𐬕𐬶𐬘𐬢𐬗𐬳𐬭𐬀𐬠𐬓𐬃𐬖𐬫𐬮𐬧𐬑𐬪𐬤𐬞𐬽𐬿𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬾𐬿𐬽𐬸𐬹𐬷𐬶𐬵𐬴𐬳𐬲𐬱𐬰𐬯𐬮𐬭𐬬𐬫𐬪𐬩𐬨𐬧𐬦𐬥𐬤𐬣𐬢𐬡𐬠𐬟𐬞𐬝𐬜𐬛𐬚𐬙𐬘𐬗𐬖𐬕𐬔𐬓𐬒𐬑𐬐𐬏𐬎𐬍𐬌𐬋𐬊𐬉𐬈𐬇𐬆𐬅𐬄𐬃𐬂𐬁𐬀; also Vandidad III, 2. Here also it is quite clear that if Ahura-mazda was the sole Creator, the mark or title of distinction *Asháum*, prefixed to a human being as Zoroaster, would never have been attached to his own name, for one that is created can not be placed on that par of equality with his creator.

6th. In the para. 80 of the Farvardin Yasht, the following description of the *Farohar* of *Ahuramazda* is given: „We „invoke the great, the excellent, the most virtuous, strong, „wise, beautiful and the most righteous Faravashi of Ahuramazda.” According to the above text, the Farohar of Ahuramazda is invoked in the same manner as those of other Yazatas and Ameshaspands, which clearly shows that Ahuramazda *must have been created* by some other being, for Farohars can only be of either the created or one that is to be created.

Here the Ahuramazda we have mentioned is not the creator of the world or Almighty God.

7th. The number of Ameshaspands given in the Avesta is seven: they are mentioned as being created by *Ahura*; and that the father and instructor of these seven is *the Ahuramazda (Ahura)*: „Who are bright, foresighted, the magnificent, the brave and the potent Ameshaspands of *Ahura*, „who are immortal and holy. They (the seven „Amesha- „spands) who are of one and the same thought, speech, „and deed — whose thoughts, speech and deed are all alike „— and whose father and instructor is Ahuramazda; and who „maintain the creation of Ahuramazda, give it form, and are its creators,” (see Farvardin Yasht 82—83; and Jamyād Yasht 15—16). This clearly shows that the creator of the Universe is not the Ahuramazda treated in this subject, but some one else. In confirmation of this I can cite many other passages from the Avesta, but I do not wish to take up your precious time by giving details.

Now, gentlemen, the short account I have given above, will, I hope, have convinced you that the Ahuramazda mentioned in Avesta refers, in almost all tracts, not to the supreme being or the Creator as is generally considered, but to the chief of the Ameshaspands, the primeval created spirit of the Lord.

The reason why Ahuramazda is generally held to be the Creator is this, that in some of the Avesta writings where the descriptions of the seven Ameshaspands is given, their father or creator is mentioned by the same name with which their chief is distinguished, viz. Ahuramazda. In the Farvardin yasht 82 and 83 and in the Jamyād yasht 15 and 16, I have quoted in the 7th instance, the creator of the seven Ameshaspands (of whom Ahuramazda is one) is distinguished by the same name of Ahuramazda; and hence the complication arises that the first created spirit is mistakenly

held the sole creator. In the passages quoted above, it is distinctly mentioned that there are seven Ameshaspands of whom Ahuramazda¹ is one and, to say more correctly their chief — and it is also particularly stated that the father and creator of these *seven Ameshaspands* is *Ahur* or *Ahuramazda* — this latter Ahuramazda, therefore, is not that who is one of the Ameshaspands but another one altogether, the Ahuramazda Ameshaspand is the created spirit of Ahura or Ahuramazda, the Creator. It must also be remembered that wherever the term Ahuramazda is used to denote the Creator, the article „the” or pronoun „that” is prefixed to distinguish the Creator from his created beings.

We have now seen that in the Avesta two separate beings viz. The Creator and his first created spirit are distinguished by one and the same name *Ahuramazda*; but the Creator is known by this name in very few places. In most places he is denominated *Ahura*. The tracts from Farvardin and Jamyād yashts given above conclusively show that the Creator of the Universe is not the Ahuramazda who is one of the Ameshaspands, but the *Ahura* or *Ahuramazda* who is the father of the Ameshaspands.

We shall now proceed with the examination of the third and last term given in the heading of this paper, viz. „Ahura.” In Avesta writings this term is used solely to indicate the Supreme Being or Creator of the Universe. The very meaning of the word shows that it is most appropriately used to denote the Lord. Its root is Aha (= Sans. अस् = Pers. است) = to be, to exist; hence the word *Ahura* means „one who gives or enunciates existence,” the Creator, God, the Lord, tc. The word „Ahura” occurs in several places in the Avesta, which clearly show that it means the Supreme Being. In all the texts in which a description of „Ahura” is given, we find that he has no opponent, antagonist or co-operator as „Ahuramazda” has. He is the Lord of his own will and is

therefore held in the Avesta as Creator of the Universe. Not only are his holiness and dignity or power supreme above all and not only are they boundless and have no termination, but his primeval created spirit, Ahuramazda, even can not approach or behold him. By his Omnipotence he is present everywhere, and invisible to the whole of his Creation. He has created everything animate or inanimate and having entrusted the management of his creation to his highest and first-created spirit Ahuramazda, has remained imperceptible to the whole of his creation and by himself can behold everything.

Now in support of my opinion that Ahura is the sole Lord of the creation I would draw your learned attention to the following.

1st. That Ahura is a higher being than Ahuramazda and is the Creator can be seen from the Aban yasht: „The holy „Ahuramazda said to Ardvishûra, oh pure Ardvishûra! from „this place of stars (heavens) go thou to the land created by „Ahura where thou wilt be invoked by the brave chiefs, kings and princes” (see Aban yasht para. 85). Here Ahuramazda asks Ardvishûra to go to the land of *Ahura* which clearly shows that Ahuramazda is not the creator but Ahura.

2nd. Again from the same Yasht it appears that Ahura is the Creator and not Ahuramazda:” Brave men will desire „from thee the swiftness of horses, the invoking and supplicating Athornans (priests) will desire wisdom and high success „to the path of *Ahura* from thee,” (see Aban yasht, para. 86).

3rd. From the same Yasht it is also plain enough that *Ahura* is the sole Lord: „I Ahuramazda said thus to Ardvishûra, that O Zarathushtra! Ardvishûra Anâhita (pure) from these stars (heavens) departed towards the land created by *Ahura*,” (see Aban yasht para. 88).

4th. — In Farvardin and Jamyâd yashts we see that Ahura is the Creator and not Ahuramazda: „We invoke the holy,







